

## EASTER ISLAND'S EMBELLISHED STONES

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## INTRODUCTION

Small stones from Easter Island with incised or pecked designs have been mentioned in many books and reports over the years. Ethnographic sources speculate on how they might have been used in ancient times, and most of these discuss them in the context of amulets or as fertility stones for chickens. The earliest descriptions are from Alexander (Tati) Salmon, the Tahitian who served as an informant for Lieutenant-Captain Wilhelm Geiseler and William J. Thomson, both of whom came to the island in the late 1800s.

During field seasons on Easter Island in 1981-83, my crews and I spent rainy days in the island's museum, Museo Antropológico Padre Sebastián Englert (MAPSE), studying and recording some of the incised stones in the museum's collection. Aside from the fact that they had been collected on the island, none had provenience, although some had come to the museum from the collection of Sebastián Englert. In two instances (and these with some provenience), we recorded incised designs on somewhat larger stones in the collection at MAPSE. One of these was excavated from the rubble fill of Ahu Tautira; the other was from 'Orongo but had been taken to the Smithsonian by the Thomson expedition. The Smithsonian subsequently returned it, along with some painted house slabs.

This paper is an effort toward compiling information about the motifs on small stones and illustrating them, some for the first time. An attempt will be made to separate out what appears to be differing functions for them. In the process, some incised petroglyph sites on Easter Island will be compared and discussed. As for the process of documentation, it should be noted that, generally speaking, incising is too faint to show up well in a photograph, thus precise scale drawings were relied upon for the recording process.

## BACKGROUND OF INCISED PETROGLYPHS ON EASTER ISLAND

Incised designs are found at some of the island's petroglyph sites (Lee 1992:120-123), on human skulls (Thomson 1891: Plate L, 6; Métais 1971), or occasionally as superimposed designs on items such as small stone carvings of human figures (Forment 1990:Plate 101; Wolfe 1973:Plate XIIb, c; Heyerdahl 1976:Plate 163). Basalt beach cobbles (*poro*) with incised designs are commonly illustrated in the literature and these appear to fall into a separate category, as is discussed below.

As for the rock art sites on the island, incising is not a common method of applying a design to rock surfaces. In most instances, deeply carved designs are made on "papa" or flat lava flow that is characterized by having tiny vesicles in its very hard, black surface. The designs on this type of stone are generally deep and very well defined, having been pecked and then abraded to make smooth deep grooves. Incised designs, however, make little impression on such surfaces.

Some petroglyphs, particularly those to be found at 'Orongo, are made in bas relief. This type of petroglyph is labor-intensive. The background is cut away, leaving the design to stand up from the matrix of the rock. Bas relief is an unusual form of carving in Polynesia, with Easter Island's examples being the most striking and beautifully made.

Where incising is found, it is on smooth vertical basalt surfaces at outcrops called *puku* or *karava* (formations found at Hanga Piko, Ava O Kiri, and a few other areas), or on smooth isolated boulders.

Small stones with incising are discussed first. A description of the two larger stones with incised designs follows, and finally, the *poro* with incised *komari* are described. The latter is discussed in the context of other examples of *komari* found at the island's petroglyph sites and general Polynesian sexual symbolism.

## PUBLISHED REFERENCES TO INCISED STONES

Thomson (1891:496) remarked that, "A custom obtained among the islanders. . . of burying something of interest or value beneath the doorposts of their dwellings. Usually it was a smooth beach pebble which was supposed to have some fetish qualities to bring good luck or ward off evil influences."

Other references about stones with incising include that of Mulloy (1961:Figs. 43-44) who illustrates stones with incising that were excavated at Vinapu. A few have recognizable motifs. Mulloy illustrated a star shape (Figure a); a possible *komari* (Figure c); and a birdman, bird and oval form (Figure 43 c, e). One (Figure 43, l) has what might be an attempt to show a bird head. The remaining stones are (seemingly) composed of cross-lines and random lines.

Mulloy and Figueroa (1978:203) illustrate some small stones with geometric incising that were found during archaeological work at Ahu Akivi (Figure 45;5-7). These were recovered from the ramp and plaza area of the *ahu*. Designs include crosshatching and other straight-line incising.

A collection of small stones with incised figures is shown in Campbell et al., 1985, and Mellen Blanco (1986-87:273-276) reported on a small stone found near Hanga Piko. It has the figure of a tuna incised on one face of the stone. He calls it an amulet or talisman. The design is quite close to carvings of tuna seen in the larger petroglyphs, particularly those located at the La Pérouse section of the island's north coast.

Imbelloni (1954) illustrated designs on both sides of a beach cobble. One shows two birdmen facing each other (*manu-piri*); the reverse side has what appears to be a *rongorongo* figure with humanoid attributes and triangular shaped ears. This is also illustrated in Ramírez (1986:23) where it is called a fertility amulet.

## MUSEO ANTROPOLÓGICO'S INCISED STONES

The incised stones studied in MAPSE are:

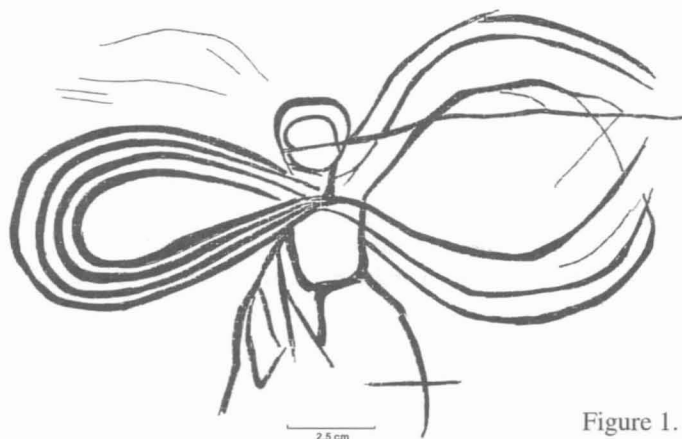


Figure 1.

Figure 1. An octopus (*heke*) motif incised on an otherwise unmodified small rock. The motif measures 20 x 12.5 cm. The rock is 12 x 17 x 16 cm. This came to the museum from the Sebastián Englert collection (See also Blixen 1977: Plate 1: Figure .8). Thirteen motifs of octopus can be seen in the rock art of several sites, mainly in the La Pérouse area where they occur on large sections of *papa* (Lee 1992: Figures 4.62 and 4.63). The examples at Ava O Kiri are particularly interesting as some are shown with long wavy tentacles and large eyes and are carved to take advantage of natural features in the lava. Octopus was sacred in Polynesia where it was associated with several creation myths.

Figure 2. A stone with traces of red pigment and an incised frigate bird figure. It was found on the flanks of Rano Kau in 1969. The motif measures 10 x 11.5 cm; See also Blixen (1977: Plate II, Figure 5). The position of the wings echoes the petroglyphs of frigate birds such as those found on Motu Nui and 'Orongo (Lee 1992: Figures 3.8; 4.47; 4.49 and 4.50). This motif is also seen on the heads of small wood statues (Esen-Baur 1989:120). Although the design on the incised stone from the museum collection appears to be casually made, it's bird-like characteristics are clear.

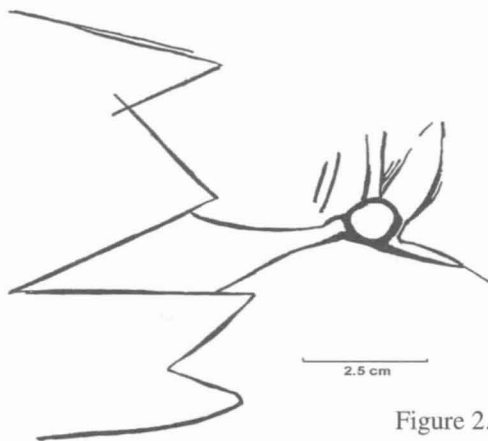


Figure 2.

Figure 3. Two incised fish motifs. One of the fish has a backbone as if shown in x-ray; the other fish may also have been so intended although the bones are only duplicated on one half of the figure. The design measures 11.5 x 12

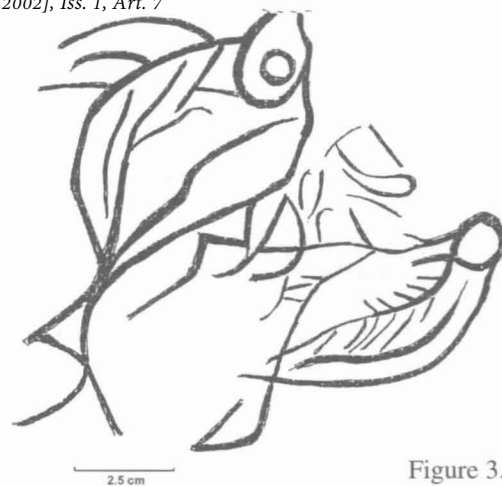


Figure 3.

cm. The stone is 20 x 15 x 7 cm. This piece came to the museum from the Sebastián Englert collection. (See also Blixen 1977: Plate 1, Figure 2). The "x-ray" design type can be seen in the rock art of the island where several large fish forms show their bone structure. All are found in the area just inland or south of 'Anakena (Lee 1992: Figures 4.52; 4.55; 4.57 and 4.71). A few unidentified scratches are on reverse side of the rock; they measure 1.3 x 4 cm.

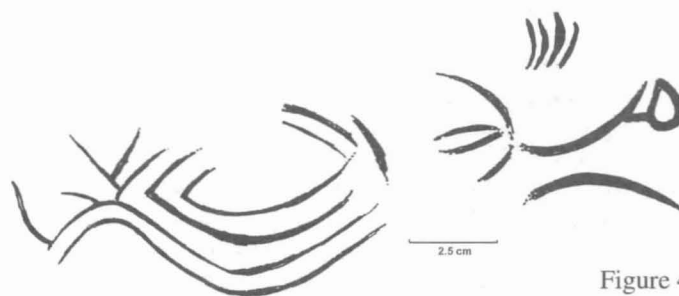


Figure 4.

Figure 4. Incised curvilinear lines with an overall measurement of 8 x 19.5 cm. The stone, which is in poor condition, is 34 x 15 x 10 cm. It is difficult to say what this may have been intended to represent. The parts that are still visible have vigorously repeating curves. The incidence of parallel curved lines is found in both *rongorongo* motifs and in the rock art designs. While not exactly like the lines on this stone, the repetition of curves is a common design element in both wood and stone carving.

Figure 5. A slightly curved line with horizontal lines (tree or branch?) measures 5.5 x 10 cm. It is incised on a stone that measures 13.5 x 17 cm. This is a rare motif on the island. The only comparable designs in the rock art can be seen at Hanga Piko where two panels display what might be construed as depictions of plant forms (Lee 1992: Figures 3.15; 4.125; and 4.126 ).

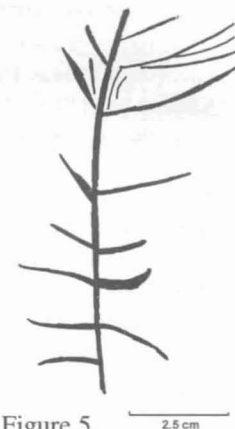


Figure 5.

Figure 6. A shell creature, perhaps intended to represent a chiton (called 'mama' on the island). The motif measures 7.5 x 9 cm and fills one side of a rough oval-shaped rock. The design is pecked out quite precisely, but the design had been previously chalked which made it difficult to record. There seems to not be an analogy to this design in the island's rock art, but a carved wooden chiton was collected in 1868 by Captain Arup and is now in the Ethnographic Museum in Oslo (Seaver Kurze 1997: Figure 25).

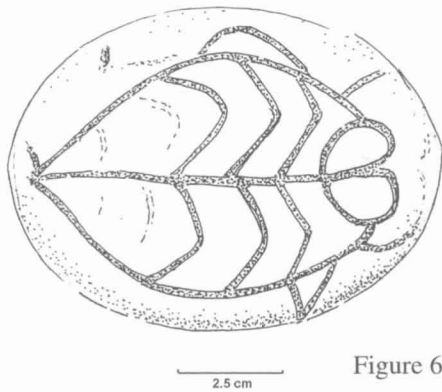


Figure 6.

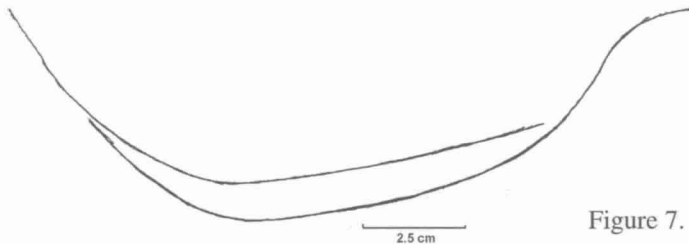


Figure 7.

One beach cobble in the museum collection has an incised canoe form (Figure 7). The design measures 17.5 x 5.3 cm on a rock that is 30 x 18 x 12 cm. This is a simple curved canoe shape, similar to many that can be seen in the island's rock art. It is especially close to some at Hanga Piko (Lee 1992: Figure 4.124). Canoes appear in the island's rock art and range from a small lunate shapes measuring 10 cm long, up to a huge petroglyph at Papa Vaka that measures ten meters in length (Lee 1992:40).

Canoes held enormous importance to Pacific islanders. Symbolically they involved class and status, journeying and settlement, and they enabled islanders to fish in the off-shore waters so they had, in addition, a practical value. It may be that a canoe engraved on a small stone served to provide supernatural protection for a fisherman.

Three small stones in the Museo Antropológico Padre Sebastián Englert have *komari* designs on them:

Figure 8. The stone measures 5.3 x 11.6 cm, and has a rough surface. The design consists of a simple incised *komari* measuring 3.8 x 8 cm. The design is cut rather deeply, with a lighter incised line at one end.

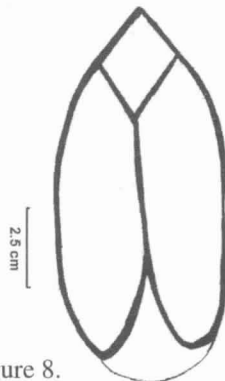


Figure 8.

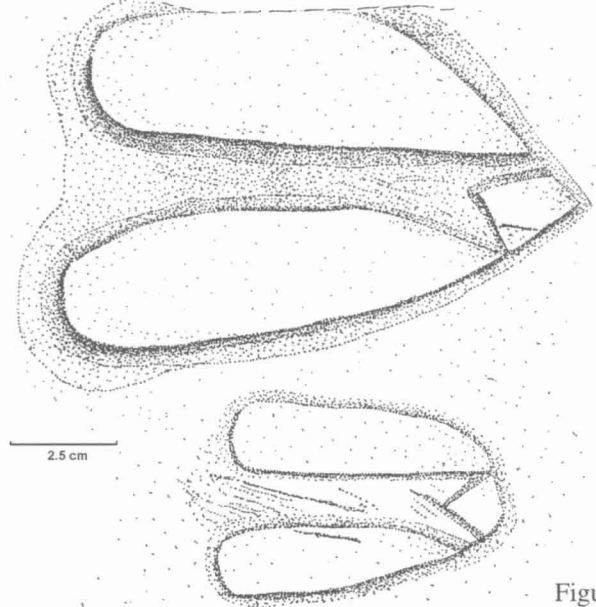


Figure 9.

Figure 9. Another stone has two *komari*. The stone measures 30 x 32 cm and has two *komari* carved in bas relief. The larger *komari* is 8.5 x 13 cm; the smaller is 5 x 7 cm. In these examples, the stone is pecked away from the figure, causing it to stand out in low relief.

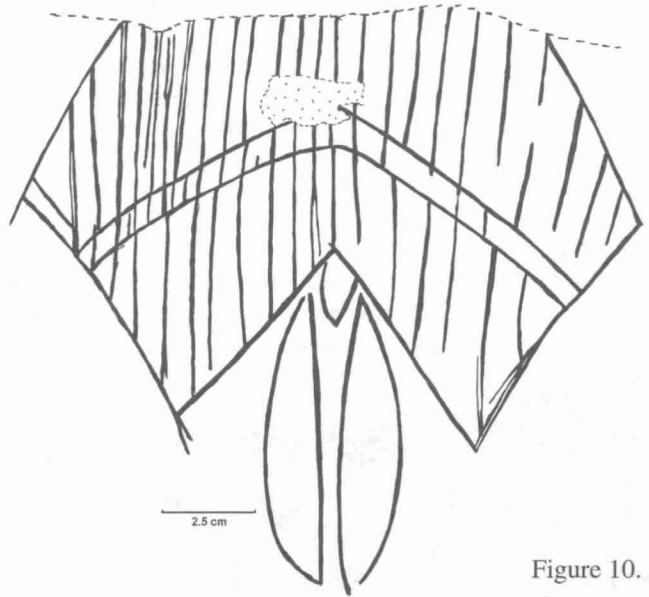


Figure 10.

Figure 10. The fourth *komari* in this group measures 3.5 x 9 cm, but when the attached motif is added (seen above the *komari*), the entire design measures 16 x 17.2 cm. The rock is 21 x 37 x 9.5 cm.

This incised rock came to the museum from the collection of Sebastián Englert and it bears a remarkable resemblance to a petroglyph that is part of a larger panel on the vertical face of a basalt outcrop at Hanga Piko (Lee 1992: Figure 4.121; See also Blixen 1977, Plate II, Figure 1). The *komari* motif is clearly a part of the larger design.

In comparison, the petroglyph at Hanga Piko also has straight lines, only in a better-defined curved shape. The latter bears a resemblance to a house shape (*hare pa'enga*). If this does indeed represent a house, the motif probably signified something that was well enough understood to explain a near copy of it.

Although her remarks refer to designs applied to wood objects, Forment's comments are germane: She states that,

"The poor quality in technique. . . which often contrasts with the quality of the sculpture itself, gives room for conjecture that some might have been added to the object later. . . . They therefore reveal a specific identity which must not, for all that, exclude the possibility that there could still be a reference to a tutelary spirit, but one that is then exclusive to a limited number of initiates or of personal nature." (Forment 1993:212).

This may be true also for the incising on small stones. If used as part of a prayer or rite of protection and was intended to be buried in a house, fine craftsmanship might not have been necessary to make it effective.

## TWO LARGER ROCKS WITH INCISING

In the collection of the Museo Antropológico Padre Sebastián Englert are two larger rocks, neither of which can be called "portable".

The first was found in the fill at Ahu Tautira during excavations and is shown in Figure 11. The rock is rough and unshaped. The face of the rock measures 62 x 50 cm, and small designs were added to it in three different places on that face. Figure 12 is a sketch of the entire rock face showing the location of the motifs; the shape on the upper right is a natural depression in the rock.

The function of the rock from Ahu Tautira is obscure. It's size is such that it surely was not moved around easily, and we have no clues as to how it might have functioned in the past. As



Figure 11. The rock from Ahu Tautira. The designs are so faint that they do not show up in the photograph. Photo Credit: W. Hyder and M. Oliver.

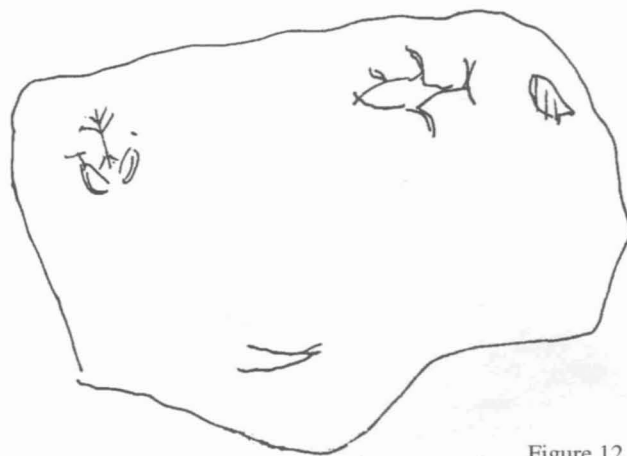


Figure 12.

it was found in the rubble fill, it may have been discarded or, perhaps, if considered as having a special power because of the incising, placed there to enhance the sacredness of the *ahu*.

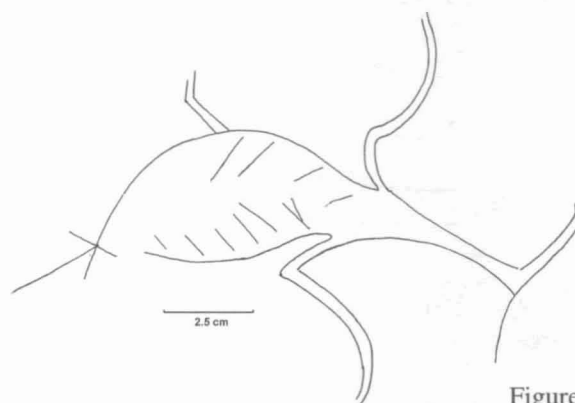


Figure 13.

The incised motif of Figure 13 (upper right in Figure 12) measures 11.4 x 17 cm and may have been intended to depict a langosta.

A second motif (upper left in Figure 12) appears to be a combination of a plant design and a highly stylized *komari* (Figure 14). This design measures 4.5 x 13 cm and is most unusual.

One other element on the same rock face (lower center in Figure 12) may be the start of a canoe shape.

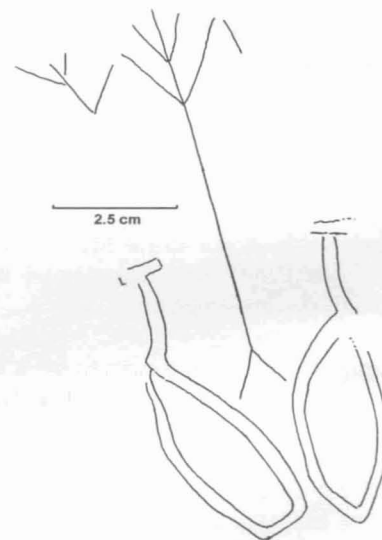


Figure 14.

The second large rock was removed from 'Orongo during the visit of the *Mohican*, and was formerly in the collection of the Smithsonian. It was collected by Benjamin F. Day of the Thomson expedition and entered the collection at the museum in 1887. In recent years, it (along with some painted house slabs) was returned to the island. Its original location at 'Orongo is not known. One face of the slab-like basalt stone is carved with at least 22 *komari* (Figures 15 and 16). The decorated area is 47 cm long.

This stone from 'Orongo appears to fit into the ceremonies described at that site where "portraits" of the young girls were engraved.



Figure 15. The rock slab from 'Orongo. The incised lines were lightly traced on thin pliofilm with a soft art pencil so as not to cause damage to the surface or the motifs. After tracing, the designs were inked as shown in Figure 16. Photo credit: W. Hyder and M. Oliver.

#### PORO WITH INCISED KOMARI

Smooth beach cobbles of various sizes seem to have been popular surfaces for incised designs. These naturally smoothed and rounded stones with added motifs are described in numerous publications, i.e., Thomson (1891:Plate LI, 4). The most common design placed on *poro* is that of a vulva sign, or *komari*, but other motifs have been recorded. For example, a large cobble on the ramp at Ahu Tongariki has an incised bird figure (Figure 17).

According to Barrow (1972:31), the *poro* with *komari* were placed in chicken runs to aid and protect egg production. However, Barrow also described these as stone pillows (*turua*).

Other *poro* have cup shaped depressions (Figure 18), and were called "nests for hens." Some informants insisted that these stones "were 'good' for hens and caused them to lay eggs" (ibid.).

Métraux (1971:263) states that vulvae are the most frequently engraved designs on *poro* and their function was to increase the magic power of the stone. He (ibid.:264) disagrees with the interpretation of Young (1903:171-2), who describes

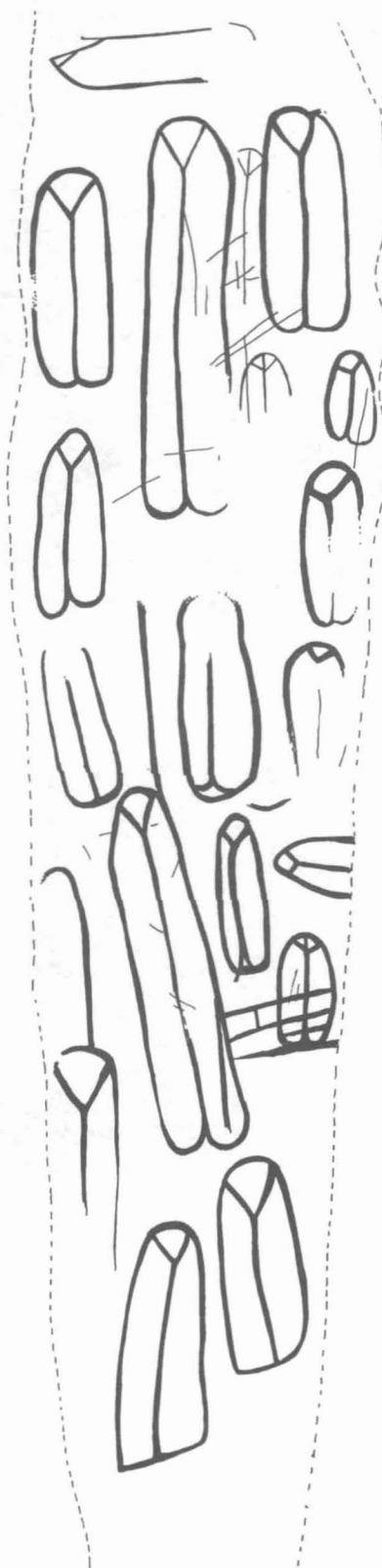


Figure 16. Tracing of the incised *komari* on the rock slab removed from 'Orongo by the Thomson expedition in 1887. It formerly was in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution. It is possible that it served as a house post or support at one of 'Orongo's stone houses.



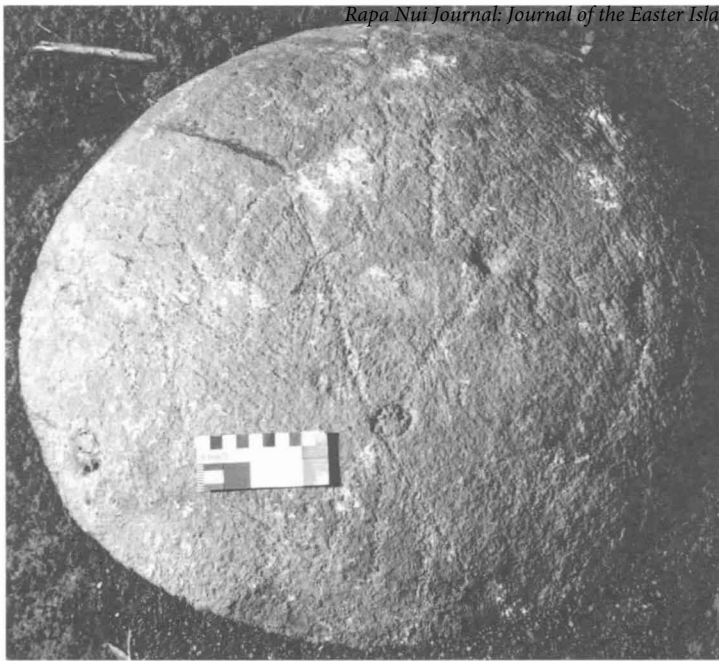


Figure 17. A *poro* from Ahu Tongariki with a frigate bird incised over about 180° of its surface, from top to bottom in the photograph. This *poro* is now located on the restored *ahu* ramp; its original position, prior to restoration, is not secure. Photo: A. Padgett

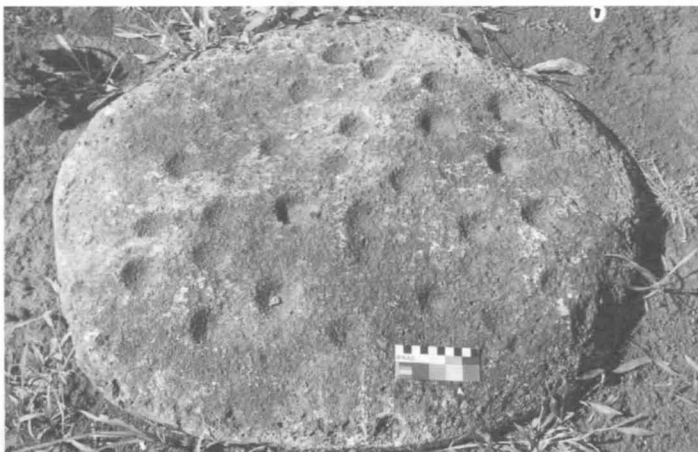


Figure 18. Another *poro* from the ramp at Ahu Tongariki has cupules on its surface. This may be of the type cited as encouraging fertility in chickens. The scrape marks on the stones are the result of bulldozer activity when the plaza area was being cleared during restoration. Photo: A. Padgett

the stones with *komari* as used in the ceremony of *hakatoro* (stretching of a girl's clitoris). Métraux (1971:264) states that *hakatoro* was not a special rite, but a long process that lasted for years under the care of the girls' mothers.

Young (1903:171-2), in regard to the *poro* with *komari*, wrote:

"...covered on both sides with rudely carved conventionalized representations of the female vulva. They are called by the natives of Rapanui 'Maea Momoa' (maea = stone; momoa = descendants, family);

also called 'Maea hika' (hika = clitoris). . . . the stones were more prized than any other object, it being claimed that they had been brought by Hoatume-tua, the pioneer chief, from the, as yet, unidentified 'Maraetoe-hau.' It is also true that the stones were – but of late years only – placed under domestic fowls with the idea that the fertility of the eggs was thus promoted." Young continues another rationale for them: "It is said by some of the old men. . . that these stones were used in the ceremony of 'Hakatoro repe' (Hakatoro = to cause to stretch, to elongate: Repe = clitoris); also called by one old man 'Hakatoro matakaho' (matakaho = clitoris). This rite was practiced on girls shortly before they arrived to puberty. A similar rite was in use at the Marquesas Island in former years. It is worthy of remark that at Ponape (Caroline Islands) the *labia minora* were stretched until they were more projecting than the *labia majora*. . . . The part played by the 'Maea Momoa' in the ceremony is obscure: the narrators declared however, that it was a necessary adjunct to the function, and that without its presence the rite could not be performed. It was 'taonga tuhunga' = the valued implement or amulet of the priest."

Young cites other examples of incised *poro*: one is at the US National Museum, one in Santiago de Chile, and three in his own possession (one of these is now at the Bishop Museum). The other two were said to be in Auckland (ibid.). Designs of disembodied vulvae are very rare in the rock art of other Polynesian islands. Only one reference has been found, and that to some small stones with vulvae from the island of Molokai, now at the Bishop Museum (Summers 1971:30; Cox and Stasack 1970:94; Lee and Stasack 1999:150).

Bormida (1951) suggested that the stones with *komari* were to stimulate fecundity of hens and were called "*maea moa*". He refers to them as 'amulets' and divided them into three groups: natural stone; modified stone; or objects sculpted into the stone.

The Brooklyn Museum (#67.183) has an incised *poro* with *komari* on both sides. It was purchased in 1966 from a local family that claimed it was found in an island cave. Other known examples are in the British Museum (a *poro* with *komari* incised plus some other lines), and the Museo Sociedad Fonck at Viña del Mar, which has an unshaped stone with several *komari* on one face.

Thomson illustrates a *poro* with incised *komari* (1891: Figure 4, Plate LI) while Campbell et al.:1985 shows, amongst a collection of incised stones, three that have *komari* on them. Forment (1990) illustrates similar stones (Pl. 108; 111; 214; and 215).

So we have descriptions of the *poro* with cupules (small pits) as encouraging fertility in chickens, but also the *poro* with *komari* have been described in the same way. It is possible that early sources, which often are not very clear and may have, in fact, been misunderstood due to language difficulties, confused the function of *poro* with *komari* and the *poro* (or other stones) with cup-shaped depressions. If the *poro* with *komari* (*maea*

*momoa* or *maea hiku*) were used in some way in the practice of elongating the clitoris, then their usage for the fertility of hens comes into question. It seems more likely that the stones with cup depressions (*maea moa*) were specifically for the hens. We don't know how the *maea hiku* may have been used but it is likely that the stones had nothing to do with chickens.

### THE KOMARI AT PETROGLYPH SITES

The most ubiquitous motif found in the rock art of the island is that of *komari*. These designs are found in all sections of the island, but the vast majority are at 'Orongo. Their sizes range from a few centimeters to the largest *komari* recorded, 130 cm in length (Figure 19). It is on a detached stone at Ahu Tongariki.

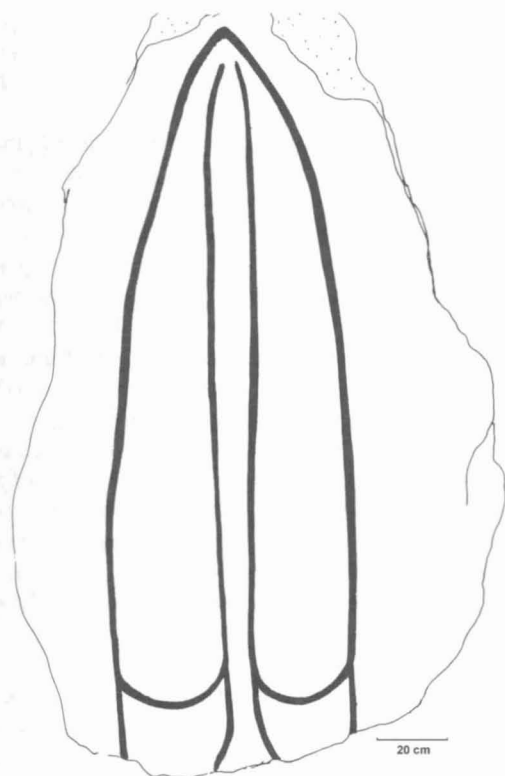


Figure 19. The largest *komari* found on Easter Island is 130 cm long. It is carved on a large *pa'enga*.

Pu o Hiro (Trumpet of Hiro), a large loaf-shaped rock has incised *komari*, many of which surround the blow hole in the rock (Lee 1992:Figure 8.2). This stone now stands near the road at La Pérouse Bay, but it is said to have been captured and carried off from the other side of the island. Legend describes the stone as having magical properties that could bring fish to the shore.

At Vaihu, a large rock (Figure 20) with *komari* is hidden away in a cave shelter.

At 'Orongo, *komari* are superimposed over birdman figures at least 48 times (Lee 1992: Figures 4:10; 4.45; 5.15; 5.21; Plates 15, 16). *Komari* also are associated with the birdmen designs in other instances (ibid.:193). At Omohe, ten *komari* are carved on a complex panel with faces, tuna and turtle, and sche-



Figure 20. *Komari* cluster on one face of a rock at Vaihu, south coast.



Figure 21. Clusters of *komari* at Hanga Oteo. The upper left shows an isolated rock. Lower right designs are on *papa*.

matic images of *hare paenga* (ibid.:Figure 4.70). At a cave on the south coast, Ana Tu'u Hata, there is a boulder with two historic sailing ships incised on one face of the rock (ibid.:Figure 4.111). At least four *komari* are incised on top of the upper incised ship. The Hanga Oteo area has many clusters of *komari*, (Lee 1992:64-5) some associated with cupules (Figure 21).

## THE MEANING OF KOMARI

On Easter Island, *Komari* occur more frequently than other petroglyph designs, with 564 recorded. This number excludes portable objects that contain this design (Lee 1992:31).

*Komari* are engraved on top of the birdman designs at 'Orongo and that gives us an indication of sequence of carving. But it also suggests that *komari* might have functioned as a means of adding to the sanctity of the birdman motif, or neutralizing it in some manner. Thomson (1891:517) stated they signified the birth of a person. Geiseler (Ayres and Ayres 1995:72) claims that a vulva tattooed on a man indicates that he is married; Arredondo (1993:216) reported that it referred to the consummation of a marriage.

The practice of lengthening the clitoris is described from the Society Islands, the Australs (Danielsson 1956:74), Marquesas (Marshall 1961:199) and Easter Island (Métreaux 1971:19). Marshall (1961:19) reports that, on Ra'ivivae, the clitoris was tied up with special fibers in order to enlarge it. The culmination of the practice was a ceremony at a sacred temple where the girls' clitoris' were inspected and measured by a priest. Then the girls were displayed to the young men in order for them to attract a husband. This parallels a practice on Easter Island where girls are said to have stood on a rock at Orongo and had their clitoris' examined. The priests then carved a *komari* on a rock to immortalize this event (Routledge 1919:263).

Missionaries obliterated these rites, as well as many other sexual aspects of the old society. But hints remain in the oral literature and in accounts by early travelers that indicate the importance of sex in ancient Polynesia. Sex was life itself to the Polynesians. Genital chants in Hawai'i were hymns of praise for royal genitalia. Erotic interests occupied all Polynesians and homosexuality was common (Suggs 1966:173). Many ruling chiefs were bi-sexual. Children were socialized in the acts of love and sexual conquests marked a successful political career. All was celebrated in dance, poetry and song (ibid.:10). In addition, the ethnography explicitly refers to *komari* as being 'portraits' of individuals, verifying the statement by Sahlins (1985:14) that "sex is the sign of sex."

## CONCLUSION

To return to the small stones with incising, Métreaux (1971:263) notes that his informants considered every stone containing an incised figure to be a talisman or amulet. He speculates that the carved figures applied to the stones may have increased their magic power, or distinguished them from ordinary stones. He adds, "Natives still remember that formerly fishermen carried in their canoes stones selected for their shape which were supposed to bring luck. Some looked like fish, others like cocks, and some suggested the form of a man. They were called *maea ika* (stones for fish). There were special ones called *maea kahi* for the *kahi* fish [tuna]."

Métreaux also notes that the stones might ward off evil influences: "Amulets were buried in houses. Thomson got a fair collection of them by digging beneath the door posts of ancient dwellings." (1971:264). Thomson (1889:538) called them fetish

stones, "*Atua Mangaro*". He described the majority as being simple beach pebbles but a few of the stones were shaped. One stone had a face outlined on it. He added that, "These were placed beneath the houses, with much ceremony, and were supposed to ward off evil influences" (ibid.).

As for the "evil influences", we need look no further than the concept of *aku aku* which refers to ghosts, or spirits of the dead. They are considered to be dangerous entities. *Aku aku* can, however, be benevolent towards one group and malevolent towards others (Métreaux 1971:399). These spirits are protective of the places where they lived in the past. Still today, islanders will point out a suggestively-shaped rock as being the abode of such a spirit. But if an islander is in territory that was known prehistorically as belonging to his/her clan, then that *aku aku* is "friendly" and not to be feared. The concept of *aku aku* is still alive in the present island population. Any unexplained accident is blamed on an unfriendly *aku aku*, and it is the rare matron who will venture out alone at night without rosary in hand to deflect any wandering *aku aku*.

The small dimensions of the stones with incising suggest they were private offerings or talismans, owner specific, and thus individualized. They may have been carried around, taken in canoes or, as Thomson (1889:496) noted, buried under the house foundation stones. Fine quality craftsmanship would not be necessary in these instances. Forment (1993) points out that the designs on portable stones may be symbols of ownership. It appears from the evidence that the small unshaped pieces of stone with fish or other recognizable elements incised on them were indeed amulets, good luck charms, and the like.

Navarro (1979) suggests that the vulvae on *poro* confirmed ownership of land by women but does not explain their use. As they are portable and can be moved around fairly easily, they seem an unlikely marker for a land claim. On the other hand, we have firm ethnographic descriptions of them as 'pillows' in connection with the stretching of the clitoris. I suggest that these stone (*poro*) "pillows" with *komari* fall into another category. They were utilized in connection to a not fully understood ritual. Certainly, "stone pillows" are an oxymoron. The loss of information about the ancient customs of the island has left us with many questions, and this may be one of them. I suggest the stones with cup shaped depressions served to encourage hens to lay eggs, and these were distinguished from the *poro* that decorated with *komari* designs. How the latter functioned in the society is unclear.

The incised designs that we recorded on a few stones in the island's museum display a vitality and charm, and show a keen eye for the natural model. The curvilinear designs, combined with a sense of playfulness, is yet another example of Rapa Nui's artistic output.

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